



Morning Alert - Wednesday, November 8, 2017

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

NHK led with a report that President Trump will deliver a speech at the South Korean assembly today to call on the international community to maximize pressure on North Korea. TBS gave top play to the U.S.-ROK summit on Monday. Fuji TV reported on an “anti-Japan” banquet held for President Trump in South Korea on Tuesday with “Dokdo” shrimp on the menu and a former comfort woman in attendance. TV Asahi also reported on the banquet. NTV led with a report that one of the nine people murdered by a man in Zama was a 15-year-old girl.

Major front-page items in national dailies included yesterday’s U.S.-ROK summit in Seoul, proposed tax code reforms for FY2018 centering on increasing the tobacco tax and income tax for high-income individuals, and the Tokyo police’s planned arrest of the president of a failed tour operator on fraud charges.

## INTERNATIONAL

### U.S., ROK forge consensus on putting maximum pressure on DPRK

All papers reported extensively from Seoul on Tuesday’s summit between visiting President Trump and his South Korean counterpart Moon, highlighting their accord on applying maximum pressure on North Korea. While underscoring the U.S. defense commitment to Seoul as evidenced by the deployment of three aircraft carriers in the vicinity of the Korean Peninsula, President Trump urged the Kim regime to come to the negotiating table. The two leaders also reportedly agreed to expedite an ongoing review of KORUS.

The dailies said despite these agreements, there is still discord between Washington and Seoul since the Trump administration harbors distrust over the ROK government’s willingness to pursue

dialogue with North Korea. Asahi expressed concern about possible disarray in trilateral cooperation between the U.S., Japan, and South Korea because of the Moon administration's conciliatory line toward its northern neighbor. The ROK government is still negative about signing an ACSA with Japan and hesitant to start discussions on the evacuation of Japanese citizens from South Korea in the event of a Korean Peninsula contingency.

Meanwhile, Yomiuri wrote that the South Korean leader was busy playing up strong ties with the U.S. with the "political honeymoon" between the President and Prime Minister Abe in mind. President Moon is reportedly fully aware of rising concerns among the Korean public about "Korea passing" by the Trump administration, which apparently attaches more importance to ties with Tokyo than with Seoul.

### **Japan lodges protest over South Korea's banquet for President Trump**

All papers reported that the GOJ filed a protest against the South Korean government yesterday over the invitation of a former comfort woman to the state banquet in honor of President Trump held last night in Seoul on the grounds that the move runs counter to the 2015 bilateral comfort women pact. A photo published by Yomiuri showed the President embracing the woman during the event. The GOJ also took issue with the "Dokdo shrimp" served at the dinner because "Dokdo" is the Korean name for the disputed Liancourt Rocks, which the Japanese call Takeshima. Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told the press: "South Korea should avoid making moves that could have adverse effects on close trilateral coordination with the U.S."

### **Abe stresses importance of ratcheting up pressure on Pyongyang**

Asahi took up a Fox News interview with Prime Minister Abe, during which he vowed to step up pressure on North Korea. He underscored the importance for all UN member states to strictly enforce relevant Security Council resolutions on the defiant regime. Asked whether Japan should intercept DPRK missiles if they fly over Japan, the premier said: "Japan deals with threats in close coordination with the United States. The nation's missile defense capabilities remain high."

In a related story, Sankei took up press remarks yesterday by Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga, who disclosed that the GOJ has been asking the USG for cooperation in rescuing the Japanese abductees in North Korea in the event of a Korean Peninsula contingency.

### **Japan anxious to enlist support for U.S.-Japan Indo-Pacific vision**

Asahi said the GOJ plans to call for support from countries in East Asia for the U.S.-Japan diplomatic initiative on creating a "free and open" Indo-Pacific region, explaining that Prime Minister Abe is set to explain the diplomatic vision when he holds talks with his regional counterparts on the margins of the APEC-related conferences in Vietnam this week. Tokyo is keen to seize the initiative in establishing a new regional order in collaboration with Washington. Other papers ran similar

stories, adding that Foreign Minister Kono met with his Australian, Vietnamese, and Thai counterparts in Da Nang, Vietnam, yesterday and asked for their endorsement of the vision.

## SECURITY

### **Abe's statement on buying more U.S. weapons raises concern in Defense Ministry**

Asahi wrote that some Defense Ministry officials are afraid that the Kantei will pressure the ministry to purchase more U.S.-made weapons systems following Prime Minister Abe's remarks at Monday's press conference with President Trump that his administration "will be buying more [defense hardware] from the United States." Although other ministry officials are taking an optimistic view by explaining that the premier's statement referred to the agreed-upon procurement of "Aegis Ashore" missile defense platforms, domestic and European defense contractors are bracing for being placed in a disadvantageous position against U.S. rivals in future SDF defense equipment procurement initiatives. The article took up comments by several security experts criticizing the prime minister for "blindly following" the United States.

Mainichi carried a similar story, quoting an unnamed MOFA official as saying that Tokyo needs to respond to President Trump's calls for more purchases so as not to displease him. The paper added that the nation's procurement of U.S. defense equipment under foreign military sale (FMS) arrangements has already soared under the Abe administration by 450% from the previous five years.

### **U.S. Navy vessels conduct night training off Sasebo in violation of accord with municipality**

Mainichi wrote that several U.S. Navy landing craft air cushions (LCACs) carried out a drill off Sasebo Bay on Tuesday night. The paper wrote that this was the first nighttime training held since the vessels were deployed at CFA Sasebo in 1995 and apparently violated an accord on noise reduction that the U.S. military sealed with the city government of Saikai, which has hosted the hovercraft unit since 2013. The city authorities are displeased about the training that is set to continue through Thursday. The U.S. Navy dismissed local calls for cancellation by saying: "High-level Navy officials made the decision to hold the training." A Sasebo base spokesperson also said nighttime training is necessary in order to operate LCACs safely in actual operations that could take place at any time of day.

### **Press invited to view F-35As**

Yomiuri reported that the USAF invited the press corps to Kadena AB on Tuesday to show them a squadron of F-35As that are temporarily deployed at the installation through next spring. The wing commander reportedly expressed hope for enhancing interoperability with the ASDF.

### **U.S., Japan, India conduct naval drill in Sea of Japan**

Tuesday evening's Yomiuri claimed in a front-page article that warships from the U.S., Japan, and India, including the USS Ronald Reagan, carried out training in the Sea of Japan over the weekend with a possible military contingency involving North Korea in mind. This was the first time for the Indian Navy to take part in a joint drill with the U.S. and Japan in the Sea of Japan.

## ECONOMY

### **U.S., Japan agree to cooperate on infrastructure exports to developing nations**

Yomiuri wrote that the Japan Bank of International Cooperation and the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) signed a memorandum in Tokyo yesterday to help finance projects involving U.S. and Japanese companies for the export of infrastructure to emerging economies.

